



California Postsecondary Education Commission

770 L Street, Suite 1160 • Sacramento, California 95814

www.cpec.ca.gov • (916) 445-1000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact

Sherri Orland

sorland@cpec.ca.gov • (916) 445-1000

Commission Looks to Better Align Postsecondary Education with Workforce Needs

SACRAMENTO — September 21, 2007 — Recent findings on workforce preparation and skills preparation and their link to systems of higher education will be presented at the next quarterly meeting of the California Postsecondary Education Commission, set for Tuesday and Wednesday, September 25–26, 2007.

As part of the Commission's ongoing research into workforce development, the contributions of California's higher education institutions to the state's social, civic and economic development will be discussed.

"Educational attainment in California is growing slower than the national average. If not addressed, this trend will continue to force employers to look outside the state for skilled and educated workers, and pose a threat to California's economic competitiveness," said Murray J. Haberman, the Commission's Executive Director.

The Commission studied how the number of degrees earned compares to available jobs in California, for selected high-demand professions: nursing and healthcare, computer-related fields, teaching, and engineering. The Commission found that in each of these fields, current and projected workforce demand is higher than the number of skilled, college-educated workers.

For example, the Employment Development Department estimates that from 2004 to 2014, California will need about 20,000 teachers for new and replacement positions each year. In 2005-06, 5,461 people received first-time teaching credentials, an annual shortfall of about 14,500. In computer-related fields, 8,600 people earned degrees, but there are about 15,200 openings, a shortfall of about 6,600.

These findings suggest California will continue to experience shortages of educated and skilled workers until the postsecondary education systems can more comprehensively integrate general undergraduate curriculum with the core workforce preparation skills employers expect of college-educated new hires. These skills include critical reasoning, problem solving, written and oral communication, and the ability to learn and adapt quickly.

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A new Commission web-based tool — School to Employment Pathways System (STEPS) — tracks degree production with employment demand for postsecondary education graduates. STEPS provides students, employers and postsecondary education systems with data on labor market needs that are linked to academic and occupational programs offered by postsecondary education institutions. A link to STEPS on the Commission website can be found at: <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/Accountability/Steps.asp>.

The report and others in the series pertaining to the public's benefit of a higher education can be viewed at: <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/Accountability/PublicBenefit.asp>.

The full meeting agenda and the Commission reports for the September 25-26 meeting can be viewed at: <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/Commission/AgendaSheet.asp>:

The Commission audio streams its meetings via the Internet: <http://www.cpec.ca.gov>.

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The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. The Commission's primary focus is to ensure that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities.